WASHINGTON TIMES
30 September 1985

Defection reopening search for CIA 'mole'

By Bill Gertz
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Reports that a former CIA operative has fled to avoid arrest as a Soviet spy have rekindled a long-standing dispute over CIA counterintelligence policy that began nearly 20 years ago during a search for a Soviet "mole" within the agency, intelligence experts say.

"The only question is whether the occasion is for the good of counterintelligence or for the

NEWS ANALYSIS

detriment of it." intelligence analyst Angelo Codevilla said of reports that a top Soviet official had defected.

It might still be too soon to determine the credibility of the defector, he said. Mr. Codevilla suggested the defection might be an attempt to confound the CIA and to distract attention from the loss of a key Soviet KGB officer in Great Britain.

STAT

In any case, he said the defector would still provide valuable information on Soviet activities to try to establish his credibility with the CIA and FBI.

Officials in Washington have placed a tight veil of secrecy over the Aug. 1 defection in Rome of Vitaly S. Yurchenko, the KGB's No. 5 man, believed to be in charge of the Line KR counterintelligence section and the bureau that handles penetration of Western intelligence services.

Mr. Yurchenko's defection reportedly caused the recent departure of "several" middle-level CIA operations officers, according to U.S. government sources.

Congressional sources said one of the CIA defectors was in a position to cause serious damage to U.S. national security and recently left the United States, the Associated Press reported Saturday.

Three former CIA employees are suspected of spying for the Soviets, but Mr. Yurchenko's ongoing interrogation was expected to lead to further revelations of KGB penetrations, CIA sources said.

Since he defected, Mr. Yurchenko has been under interrogation by CIA and FBI counterintelligence officials at an undisclosed location. Experts say that if the debriefing began in August, other suspected Soviet agents will be revealed in the coming months and a "damage assessment" of the CIA penetrations will take place.

Sen. Malcom Wallop, D-Wyo., a former Senate Intelligence Committee member and an outspoken advocate of tougher CIA counterintelligence measures, said he believed Soviet penetrations of the CIA were not limited to former agency employees.

"I'm very suspect of the fact that its only former CIA employees," Sen. Wallop said in an interview.

Mr. Wallop said he had no direct knowledge of the Yurchenko case but stated "the only thing I have direct knowledge of is that we still don't have internal counterintelligence capabilities."

Mr. Wallop criticized former CIA director Stansfield Turner who assured the senator in the past it was "impossible there was a Soviet mole" in the CIA, he said.

"You have to view that with extreme skepticism," Mr. Wallop said.

Adm. Turner could not be reached for comment.

Since Western intelligence agencies have succeeded in penetrating the KGB and GRU intelligence services in the past, "it's inconceivable that after all those years of confrontation between East and West . . . that

only penetrated us with past people," Mr. Wallop said.

Justice Department and CIA officials on Friday denied news reports that Mr. Yurchenko had identified "several" CIA employees as Soviet agents.

The denial provided the first official confirmation that Mr. Yurchenko was in American hands.

The fact that former CIA officials are suspected of operating as Soviet spies or have defected supports the long-held suspicions of many former CIA counterintelligence officials who believe the CIA has been penetrated by an deep cover agent, or "mole," working for Moscow.

Soviet defector Anatoliy Golitsyn, the only KGB defector to have attended the Soviets' higher intelligence academy, told CIA counterintelligence officials when he defected in 1961 that the Soviets controlled a mole in the senior levels of the CIA, according to published accounts.

Mr. Golitsyn provided leads that uncovered Soviet agents in the French, Swedish and British governments, including the notorious Soviet spy Harold "Kim" Philby, who operated as double agent in the British intelligence service MI6.

The search for a mole in the CIA proved fruitless.

But Mr. Golitsyn, who holds unorthodox views on Soviet policy, was challenged by another defector, Yuri Nosenko, whom many intelligence officials believed to be a provocateur sent by Moscow to distract U.S. officials from finding a Soviet mole in the CIA.

"Here was a fella who came over [in 1964] and flunks every one of his polygraph tests . . . and nevertheless is believed because it would be inconvenient not to believe him," Mr. Codevilla said of Mr. Nosenko.

A recent CIA report on Soviet deception described Mr. Nosenko and another Soviet agent codenamed Fedora as "good" defectors contrary to FBI evidence that Mr. Codevilla said proved the two Soviets were loyal to Moscow while pretending to supply secrets to the United States.

Mr. Nosenko was later hired as an agency counterintelligence lecturer by Adm. Turner in a drastic reversal of the CIA's policy of doubt toward the defector, according to published accounts.

Mr. Wallop said a discovery that former CIA operatives worked for the KGB could vindicate former CIA counterintelligence chief James Angleton.

Mr. Angleton and his counterintelligence section led the investigation of possible Soviet penetration of the CIA during the early 1960s based on information supplied by Mr. Golitsyn and other defectors.

The mole hunt led to internal political disputes between the CIA's counterintelligence section and its

Soviet operations division, according to published accounts.

After Mr. Angleton left the agency in 1974, the CIA's counterintelligence section was gutted through transfers and forced retirements, and a Soviet division official took over the post of counterintelligence chief.

Adm. Turner, in memoirs released earlier this year, criticized Mr. Angleton's counterintelligence section for disrupting the agency during the search for Soviet penetrations of the CIA.

The CIA's present deputy director, John McMahon, was appointed by Adm. Turner to a senior operational post and has been known to oppose past counterintelligence policies as well as policies formulated by the present CIA director, William Casey. Mr. McMahon lobbied on Capitol Hill against covert assistance to the Nicaraguan resistance, intelligence sources said.

Mr. Yurchenko defected while investigating the disappearance of a Soviet scientist who had vanished earlier this summer, intelligence sources said.

Before defecting, Mr. Yurchenko was the fifth ranking KGB official and has also been identified as a senior Communist Party official responsible for overseeing the KGB, a Soviet Foreign Ministry official, and the KGB's chief of operations in the United States between 1975 and 1980.

As the official in charge of the KGB's American operations, Mr. Yurchenko would have directed the estimated 4,000 Soviet bloc intelligence officials. A network of American agents working under for the Soviets could number in the thousands, experts say.

The only recent CIA operatives linked to the Soviet Union are David Barnet and Philip Agee. A former CIA operative in Asia, Barnet was caught spying for the Soviets, and former CIA officer Agee has acknowledged publicly that he cooperated with the Cuban authorities that are closely tied to the Soviet Union in writing exposes of CIA operations and agents.

Soviet Embassy press spokesman Boris Malakhov would not comment on reports of Mr. Yurchenko's defection.

But Soviet Foreign Ministry press spokesman Vladimir Lomeiko, asked if the Yurchenko defection would affect the arms talks in Geneva, told reporters Friday "it would be inappropriate to link these two things."

Asked if Mr. Lomeiko meant to confirm Mr. Yurchenko's defection, Mr. Malakhov would not elaborate on Mr. Lomeiko's remark. He would not say whether the Soviet Embassy in Washington had inquired about Mr. Yurchenko with the State Department.